

1. Homosexuality in Buddhism – A Sin?

This time I selected the word “sin”, even though I completely disagree with its use in Buddhist terms. However, this time “homosexuality”, as I have mentioned it in a Pāli scripture, seems to be mentioned not as a “demerit” per se, but rather as a sign of decadence. I speak of *Cakkavatti Sīhanāda Sutta*, the *sutta* no. 26 of *Dīgha Nikāya*:

“And among the generation whose life-span was five hundred years, three things increased: incest, excessive greed and deviant practices ... and as a result, the children of those whose life-span had been five hundred years lived, some for two hundred and fifty years, some for only two hundred.”¹

The Pāli Commentary, as translated by M. Walshe in the same book on page 795, as end-note no. 795, says: “*Micchā-dhamma*. DA says ‘men with men, women with women.’” – In other words, homosexuality is one of the leading factors that caused (average) human life-span to decrease from 500 years to 250 or 200 years only. The similar theme occurs one more time in the *Paloka Sutta* or *Ariguttara Nikāya 3, Brāhmaṇa Vagga*, where the explanation is different – that it is greed for possessions of others.

It should be however mentioned, that the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the Code of Discipline that contains most of the rules that monks follow, mentions five kinds of *pañdaka*, sexually uncommon persons. These five however reflect either mental sicknesses related to sexuality, or physical abnormalities, they are namely:

1. *Āsitta Pañdaka*, who ejaculates because of the ecstasy that he obtains when his mouth is full of sperm of another person.
2. *Usūya Pañdaka*, who ejaculates because of his jealous thoughts that arise when he watches a couple indulging in sexual intercourse.
3. *Opakkamika Pañdaka*, who has lost his testicles due to a physical attack or damage caused by another person/animal.
4. *Pakkha Pañdaka*, who is sexually “normal” during certain phases of moon, and “abnormal” during the other times.
5. *Napumsaka Pañdaka*, who is missing testicles since birth.

These five kinds of *pañdaka* are mentioned in *Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā – 1. Mahākkhandhaka - Pañdakavatthukathā* and explained in detail in the relevant *Tikā*. The first two kinds of *pañdaka* are allowed to become monks, and often times they were misrepresented by Buddhist community as homosexuals. (The remaining three are strictly prohibited from entering and staying in the community

¹ “*The Long Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*”, Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publications, Canada, 1995; p.401 .

of monks, and if they “happen” to enter, they are ordered to be disrobed.) I am not a homosexual, but I am capable of the logic assumption that there are many homosexuals in the world who have never had a mouth full of another’s sperm, nor did they ejaculate out of jealousy when watching somebody else during sexual intercourse. Hence I strongly believe that these five kinds of *pāṇḍakas* have nothing to do with mentally healthy homosexuals. The fact that the first two are anyway allowed to become monks doesn’t seem to me as a good reason to think that all homosexuals ought to fit in that description.

Ancient India is very “open” in sexuality, and this will be best understood if you read the *Pārājika Pāli* of *Vinaya Piṭaka*, especially the third *pārājika* rule. Homosexuals, pedophiles, zoophiles, necrophiles, and many many other are there mentioned without any sign of that being a taboo or an unknown thing.

The most interesting thing regarding this sexuality problem is “spontaneous sex-change”. The scriptures take for granted, that a man can spontaneously “change” into a woman, and woman can change into a man. As for monks, if a monk changes spontaneously into a nun, it is perfectly ok, they just continue as a nun. For nun it’s same – they change overnight into a monk, and that is also perfectly ok.² I would like to share with you this wonderful website that speaks about a particular case of spontaneous sex-change:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMguOwvImDU>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_change

2. The Buddha – Not a Vegetarian?

The Buddha is reported to have eaten meat (pork) in *Parinibbāna Sutta* or *Dīgha Nikāya*, and (even though that must never be said or assumed, otherwise I am a heretic) had certain intestinal difficulties due to that - http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/lifebuddha/2_29lbud.htm . The Pāli Commentary explains that the Buddha’s intestinal problems were not caused by the pork diet, but it forgets to enlighten us with an alternative explanation.

There is an interesting *sutta* in *Suttanipāta – Cūlavagga*, named *Āmagandha Sutta*. In this *sutta*, a group of ascetics are awaiting coming of a Buddha, and expecting He will be a vegetarian, they are also vegetarians. However, the Buddha comes and refutes the idea that He should be a vegetarian – explaining

² I would like to note here, that this is how a “true” *bhikkhunī* ordination could become established and no *Theravāda* monk in the world would ever tell a single word against its validity. The problem is, that “spontaneous sex-change” is, ehm, spontaneous – and hence not very controllable. The idea of surgical operation is utter failure of scriptural knowledge – as soon as the surgeon removes the monk’s testicles, the monk becomes *opakkamika pāṇḍaka* and is thus disqualified from monkhood (and nunhood as well) for the rest of his life.

them that to refrain from *āmagandha* ("verminous odor") does not mean to refrain from meat & fish, but it means to refrain from evil actions. These then became disciples of the Buddha and at that moment they all became Arahants. – From this ven. U Ariya, the author of *Kathein Ayathar*, a famous book about Kathina in Myanmar, assumes that being a vegetarian as "a middle path" may be a supportive condition for attainment of Nibbāna, although it should not be published as an austerity or virtue.

I would like to point out the fact, that vegetarians have saved millions of lives of beings. This is for me a very important reason to be a vegetarian, apart from the **environmental and health** reasons that should be always reflected upon when we speak about reducing or removing meat & fish from one's diet. The counting of animals that are "saved" by each vegetarian every year is meticulously counted here:

<http://www.countinganimals.com/how-many-animals-does-a-vegetarian-save/>

<http://www.zmescience.com/ecology/animals-ecology/eating-less-animals-30062015/>

In the *Jātaka 536*, "Kunāla Jātaka" we can find a mention about eating meat as being a habit of frivolous, reckless people. In this case the target are women: *majjamamṣa niratā asaññatā* – "women indulge in (drinking) alcohol, (eating) meat, and (indulge in) carelessness." It seems, at least according to this source, that the author of the *Jātaka* (be it the Buddha or monks) did not appreciate eating meat.

May all beings be happy,

Monk Sarana